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2006.

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Murnaghan, S. (2007). Review of: Charles Martindale, Richard F. Thomas, *Classics and the Uses of Reception*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2006..
Bryn Mawr Classical Review, 2007.07 (19), Retrieved from http://repository.upenn.edu/classics_papers/68

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Disciplines

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Bryn Mawr Classical Review 2007.07.19

Charles Martindale, Richard F. Thomas, *Classics and the Uses of Reception*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2006. Pp. xiii, 335. ISBN 978-1-4051-3145-2. \$36.95 (pb).

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Word count: 2553 words

[Authors and titles are listed at the end of the review.]

The emergence of reception as an increasingly central subfield within classics represents in part a new direction, in part the renaming and redefinition of familiar activities, formerly known as history of scholarship and study of the classical tradition. Those activities have generally been understood as prolegomena to, or digressions from, the classicist's main business of studying antiquity, but with the name "reception" comes the claim that reception is an integral part of classics itself.

Construed this way, reception offers classicists both an expanded reach and the promise of a new theoretical basis for our discipline. Like the recent expansion (or explosion) of the classical canon, the turn to reception gives us much new material to work with, including some not available from antiquity: for example, actual performances of plays, or works by authors with reliable biographies. As Elizabeth Pettejohn observes in a fascinating account of the Venus de Milo, it is much easier to tell a satisfying story about the statue's life as a cultural icon since its discovery in 1820 than about its significance for the culture that produced it. Reception also claims a strong theoretical grounding, derived mainly from Jauss and Gadamer, but articulated most influentially for classics in Charles Martindale's 1993 book *Redeeming the text*. Martindale's position is summed up in the statement (quoted repeatedly throughout this volume as a kind of mantra for the enterprise) that "Meaning is always realized at the point of reception." This claim is subject to various refinements, but clearly offers an alternative to traditional, positivistic views of classics as the quest for unmediated knowledge of an exemplary past. With the idea of an essential, knowable past under pressure from various forms of postmodernism, it is a relief to highlight instead the partiality and particularity of any attempt to grasp antiquity. As classicists give up the struggle to defend antiquity's privileged place in history, there is considerable appeal in focusing on what others have made of that cultural moment, including the creative artists who (as Pettejohn points out) sometimes seem more confident of the enduring value of the classics than professional classicists do.

Drawing from an APA panel and a follow-up conference in Bristol, this volume brings together twenty-three essays by some of the most thoughtful and accomplished of the many scholars now working in classical reception, with the aim of capturing the promise and variety of the field. The collection begins with an updated manifesto from Martindale and a theoretical "provocation" by William Batstone, followed by two groups of essays representing theory ("Reception in theory") and practice ("Studies in reception"), and then an "Afterward" by Duncan Kennedy.

The distinction between theory and practice often blurs in the actual contributions, since the theory chapters include exemplary readings and the practice chapters display plenty of methodological self-awareness. But it is a useful distinction for highlighting the presence of two divergent tendencies within the field. The first tendency is largely historical and weighted towards the modern: it involves identifying and analyzing the many ways in which the post-classical world has responded to the classical past and understanding those responses primarily in terms of their own post-classical times and places. This is an extension of previous work on the classical tradition, but with greater attention to the particular social and institutional contexts of reception. As Ralph Hexter observes, classicists working on the classical tradition have often scanted the broader cultural currents in which each instance of reception participates, producing, for example, studies of the reception history of a single author that end up constructing an artificial, self-contained tradition of that author. He calls for students of classical reception to produce thicker descriptions of the contexts of reception -- a necessary goal, but one that prompts the question of whether classicists, rather than experts in those various contexts, are those best qualified to undertake it. The other tendency is more theoretical and concerned with antiquity itself, and especially with the limits on our capacity to apprehend antiquity. It involves thinking through the challenge reception theory offers to the idea of a stable, knowable past and asking whether the location of meaning at the point of reception rules out the possibility of recovering authentic ancient reality. This is clearly the business of classicists, for whom recovery of the past has traditionally been an unquestioned aim.

The contributors to this volume occupy many points on the spectrum between these poles and collectively offer no single theory of reception studies. Instead, we find multiple elaborations of what it might mean for the moment of reception to be privileged as it is in Martindale's formulation, with divergent positions on fundamental issues. One of those issues is whether the privileging of reception means that reception gets sole credit for determining meaning, with no contribution from the ancient object being received. Most contributors think not, and we find repeated assertions of the continuing force of something authentically ancient within reception, often invoking the model of dialogue or Jauss' claim that instances of reception release meanings that are latent in their sources, but not yet recognized. But there are meaningful differences between the view that each instance of reception offers a direct, if partial, witness to its original source (Prettejohn) and the view that an ancient object of reception is never seen, even in part, except as remade by successive acts of reception (Martindale), or the view that certain features we consider intrinsic to ancient texts, such as their genre, are actually constructed retrospectively through reception (Skoie).

Another tricky question is whether all instances of reception have an equal status, as witnesses to their ancient sources or in other terms, or whether we can and should discriminate among them. Recognizing all engagements with the past as forms of reception calls into question the scholar's habit of ruling on which previous responses are right and wrong. This volume contains some evidence that that habit is hard to break, and some thought-provoking arguments both for suspending and for exercising judgment in evaluating receptions. Katie Fleming shows how readily uses of the classical past are stigmatized as abuses when they are associated with an agreed-on evil like fascism, a verdict that lacks theoretical justification and that occludes a full understanding of fascism and its participation in broader traditions of appropriating the past. Martindale, on the other hand, calls for judgments of value in our decisions about which classical authors/reception traditions we pay attention to. In doing so, he resists the possibility that, by shifting our attention to reception, we might be able to evade the task of justifying our material, proving the interest of the classical world by invoking the interest it has had for others rather than its intrinsic value.

The urgency of these issues -- of the authentic presence of an ancient element within modern receptions, and of the relative value of different receptions -- might seem to depend on whether the receptions in question are scholarly interpretations that aim to reconstruct or recover

antiquity, or creative works that are not expected to meet that goal. While that seems a self-evident distinction, one of the main contributions of reception theory is to show how slippery it actually is, and this volume contains many demonstrations of the correlation between interpretation and creative adaptation. Craig Kallendorf, for example, shows that a critic contemplating Milton's use of Vergil really has two overlapping objects of study: Milton as a rewriter of Vergil, and Milton as a reader of Vergil, who works with a certain (surprisingly contemporary) understanding of Vergil's work. And it is an inevitable observation that every student of reception is also properly an instance to be studied. Thus Simon Goldhill concludes a discussion of Alma-Tadema's painting of Sappho by wondering whether the complex sexual longings he finds there, silent and unacknowledged at the time the painting was first exhibited, reflect Victorian modes of tacit representation or our own assumptions about the Victorians.

In an afterward to the volume, Duncan Kennedy notes that Miriam Leonard reading Derrida and Vernant needs herself to be read -- as does whoever is reading her -- and so forth. This limitless self-awareness can get wearisome, but a heightened sense of the situatedness of any interpretation is nonetheless one of the most valuable contributions of reception theory; as Richard Thomas puts it, by studying reception we "go some way towards objectifying our subjectivities." Reception lends support to methodologies that otherwise come under suspicion for their open declarations of interest; a prime example is feminism, whose affinities to reception are well described here by Genevieve Lively. At the same time, if we are learning to recognize every response to the past as somehow blinkered, then maybe we can also be freer to appreciate the insights that emerge from positions of sweeping conviction.

Heightened attention to the politics of interpretation dovetails with the call issued by some contributors (among them Batstone, Leonard, and Saunders) for the dynamic power of reception to be used in service of positive change. The way this is to be realized remains a little vague in the more theoretical discussions, but possibilities are suggested in several studies detailing how the classics have been appropriated and redeployed by people left out in the cold by classical culture (both ancient and modern). Lorna Hardwick outlines the way Greek drama has been used to foster self-emancipation, civic participation, and political and cultural development among former colonial subjects. Siobhán McEluff describes the many uses of classical culture, including the stirring of revolutionary sentiments, among non-elite readers in Ireland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. And Helen Kaufmann argues that Derek Walcott's *Omeros* effects a healing process of decolonization by putting the poem's narrator, one of its major characters, and its readers through the experience of decoupling the character who happens to be named Helen from an oppressive association with Helen of Troy.

The tight link between studies of classical reception and studies of the classical past is evident in shared preoccupations. The examples of reception chosen for study mirror the aspects of antiquity that are currently most interesting to classicists, as in the three essays on the marginalized subjects of imperialism mentioned above, or in Goldhill's account of Victorian representations of Greek sexuality. Several of these essays are concerned with thinkers who have been especially influential in shaping recent approaches to classical culture: James Porter reveals Foucault's rootedness in the thought of the Enlightenment; Miriam Leonard assesses the mix of past and present in the writings of Derrida and Vernant. And several essays are concerned with two forms of reception to which classicists have been especially drawn as tools for recreating ancient experiences of literary works: translation (Alexandra Lianeri, Richard Thomas) and performance (Pantelis Michelakis).

A similar convergence of reception studies and classical studies occurs in several essays that uncover an interest in reception within classical sources: here reception itself becomes the meaning released through later study. Tim Whitmarsh makes a case for Lucian's *Vera Historia* as anticipating, even requiring its own reception: in his preface, Lucian makes an explicit point of how his readers will define themselves through their responses to the text that follows. Kevin

Haynes offers a related argument that the divergent viewpoints and challenges to received opinion that we expect to find in modern receptions of classical texts are constitutive features of the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid*. John Henderson proposes that Feuerbach's painting *Das Gastmahl des Platon* enacts Plato's own point about the inadequacy of images. A variant of this critical move is offered by Vanda Zajko. She begins her essay with a strong argument for psychoanalysis as particularly useful for understanding reception because it illuminates the processes of identification through which readers respond to texts; this is followed by an interesting, but less convincing attempt to use the concept of identification in an analysis of Hector and Andromache in *Iliad* 6 as struggling receivers of each other's messages. And, true to a collection that steers clear of orthodoxy, Tim Saunders also questions the procedure of turning ancient texts into examples of anything, even of reception itself.

Individually, the essays in this volume offer far more in the way of interesting information and incisive analysis than this overview can possibly convey, and their overall quality is exceptionally high. Together, they make it clear why studying reception is the natural business of contemporary classicists. Reception, in both its more practical and its more theoretical manifestations, answers to two longings that have been developing within classics over the last several decades. One is for new ways of articulating the value of the classics in the face of diminishing institutional and intellectual support for traditional forms of classical learning. It makes sense that we should be looking about to see what the classical world has meant to others, especially to people different from ourselves. The other is for a way to become leaders rather followers in the realm of theory. Reception, with its claim to locate the realization of meaning, offers a broad theoretical basis for all attempts to know and understand the past. And here classicists can claim exemplary status, dealing as we do with a part of the past that has been particularly charged with value, subject to nostalgia, and difficult to access. Martindale begins the volume by cheerfully embracing the imperialism of classicists who take on modern culture through the study of reception, and Kennedy ends it by echoing his sentiment. But this body of work is not just a coordinated foray into someone else's territory; students of classical reception are writing a collective autobiography and developing a new charter for our discipline.

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